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BROWN UNIVERSITY Providence, Rhode Island • 02912

26 August 1969

MENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

Mr. Michael Seligman  
NBC Television Network  
30 Rockefeller Plaza  
New York, New York 10020

Dear Mike:

I watched "The Pueblo: A Question of Intelligence" last night over NBC television from 7:30 to 8:30 p.m., E.S.T., and wish to advise that I consider it to be one of the most biased and irresponsible pieces of television journalism which I have ever seen.

It must be acknowledged at the start that under certain circumstances it is a very foolish individual who submits to an interview, or in this instance a TV taping, and yields all control over what may be used or the context in which it is used. In this instance I was this foolish person. Our telephone conversations must have totalled several hours. The taped interview lasted some four hours. I did this in order to try to place in factual perspective some of the unclassified aspects of the U. S. intelligence system, under the assumption that you, who had identified yourself as a Brown graduate, and NBC would use the material responsibly and in context. I considered this expenditure of unremunerated time to be in the public interest. The result as produced by NBC was neither in the public nor the national interest, nor was it a fair or objective analysis.

"The Pueblo: A Question of Intelligence" is an NBC/Frank McGee editorial directed toward convincing its audience that the U. S. intelligence system is too big, too expensive and out of control. It uses the Pueblo and its unfortunate commander and crew as the vehicle for this message, never once addressing itself to the question of the need for the ship's mission -- except in Bucher's own words -- nor how it fitted into the requirements for intelligence on North Vietnam.

Except for one fleeting reference to the possibility of the South Koreans seizing a Russian communications trawler in retaliation, it makes little effort to relate the Pueblo incident to the worldwide intelligence activities of the Soviet Union and the United States.

A few sentences of what I said -- one or two minutes, probably less than one percent of the total interview -- were used, and then repeated or alluded to by McGee. As used, without my explanations, they were only out of context but left an erroneous impression of what I said.

On size: I made the statement that the U. S. intelligence system had tens of thousands of people, perhaps running into six figures. This is the portion that was used. Completely dropped was my explanation that this included thousands of researchers, analysts, communicators, etcetera, and covered the entire range from reading newspapers to sophisticated electronic intelligence. Further, the implication was left that all of these people were engaged in "spy" work. I am sure you personally will recall that I went to pains to explain that "spy" work constituted only a small portion of the work of the U. S. intelligence system.

On cost: I made the statement that the cost of the U. S. intelligence system could run to eight or ten billion dollars if one included such things as scouting submarines, aerial reconnaissance, photographic satellites, etcetera, but that the actual cost of the true system itself was much less. Only the \$8 - 10 billion figure was used, distorting what I said.

On controls over the intelligence system: I said the most important control was that of Congress. You asked if Congress exercised enough control and I replied, "No, of course not -- the Congress is a busy body..." Cut off at that point I could be accused of calling Congress busybodies, except that happily my vocal inflection did not leave that impression. Left out was my explanation of how Congress did review the work of the intelligence system, of the review work of the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board, of the Bureau of the Budget, etcetera -- points that I always stress in any lectures I give on the intelligence system. You will recall that I went into some length explaining how the Congressional committees work, the great demands on their time, and the efforts made for a meaningful review. Again, a very erroneous implication given to my statement,

Obviously I am not suggesting that all of my statements should have been used, but I am protesting most strongly the use out of context to prove points that were quite different from what I said. It is a flagrant abuse of my time and effort. Mr. McGee was given ample time to philosophize in front of Bancroft Hall, the Congressional office buildings, etcetera.

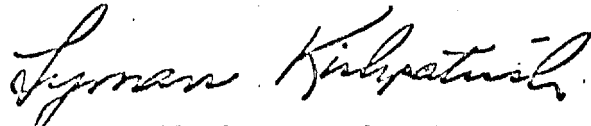
As I said at the start, this was a foolish misplacement of trust on my part. In the future I will either refuse to say anything (perhaps the wisest, except that it leaves CIA and the intelligence system without any informed defenders who can speak publicly), have a lawyer present, or have a very carefully worded contractual agreement.

Finally, as a former journalist and as an author, I have become more and more concerned about the editorial liberties taken by the public media in the selection of the news, the

manner of presentation, and the failure to differentiate between fact and opinion. The sacred right of a free press is now being used as a license for an activity for which it was not intended. This may be the moment for a campaign to protect the public by tighter laws and controls.

In any event, I am sending a copy of this letter to the Chairmen of the Congressional Committees, to the Chairman of the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board, to the Director of Central Intelligence and the Secretary of Defense, and to Senators Pastore and Pell of Rhode Island.

Sincerely yours,



Lyman B. Kirkpatrick, Jr.  
Professor of Political Science  
and  
University Professor